

Application No.: 10/670,320

Reply to the Office Action dated: April 12, 2007

**REMARKS**

Claims 1, 3, 8-28 are active in this application.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the application, as amended, in view of the following remarks.

This case qualifies for the exemption under 102(e)/103(c) because Yagi, and the present invention were commonly owned by Ricoh Company Limited at the time the present invention was made. The 102(a) date of Yagi (July 24, 2003) is overcome by filing the Certified English Translation of the Japanese priority document JP 2002-365782, filed December 17, 2002 (translation attached herewith). Applicants have thereby perfected their claim to priority.

Therefore, the rejection of Claims 1, 3, 8-12 and 15-27 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Yagi et al, and the rejection of Claim 28 over Yagi et al are believed to be unsustainable as the present invention is neither anticipated nor obvious and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

Regarding the **provisional** double patenting rejection, the MPEP instructs the Examiner to withdraw the provisional rejection if it is the only issue remaining in one case and convert the provisional rejection in the other application to a double patenting rejection. MPEP 822.01.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge that **all references** cited in the **Information Disclosure Statement, filed in the above-identified application on August 31, 2006**, have been considered. Notably, **references AA and AW were not initialed**.

Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner acknowledge that the references cited in the **Information Disclosure Statement, filed in the above-identified application on March 6, 2007**, have been considered.

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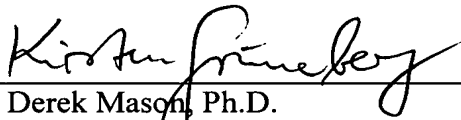
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This application presents allowable subject matter, and the Examiner is kindly requested to pass it to issue. Should the Examiner have any questions regarding the claims or otherwise wish to discuss this case, he is kindly invited to contact Applicants' below-signed representative, who would be happy to provide any assistance deemed necessary in speeding this application to allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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